



Reduce harmful work stressors.
Improve job quality and health.

Healthy Work **Strategies**

Role of labor unions in promoting work/life balance practices at work in Great Britain

In 2017, a team of researchers published results of their new analysis of data from the 2011 national Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS) to examine the connection between **unionization** (for example, percent of union members in a workplace, or presence of an on-site union representative) and work/life balance. The 2011 WERS data is based on a sample of 2,680 workplaces in Great Britain (which are representative of all workplaces in Great Britain), and includes data collected from 2,680 senior managers in human resources, 1,002 worker representatives, and 21,981 employees. The research team looked at survey results from both workers and managers, and compared workplaces with and without a union presence.

Work/life balance practices or policies mentioned in the survey included:

- job sharing
- working from home
- working reduced hours
- ability to change work hours
- working a set number of hours with a flexible schedule
- working compressed hours, or more hours over fewer days
- existence of a workplace nursery or nursery linked with a workplace
- financial help for child care or for care of older adults
- parental leave, leave for caretaking, and paid emergency care leave
- maternity and paternity pay above the required minimum

National survey results

The research team found that **unionized** workplaces had:

- more work/life balance practices and policies than non-union workplaces
- managers who were less likely to think it is the employees' responsibility alone to balance work with non-work responsibilities

- managers with more understanding about employees' non-work responsibilities
- less chance of working long hours (such as work cultures where working overtime is expected)
- less chance of having job-related anxiety

References:

1. Bryson, A., & Forth, J. (2017). Work/life Balance and Trade Unions. Trades Union Congress. <http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/20608>.
2. Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS) website. <https://www.gov.uk/>.
3. The 2011 Workplace Employment Relations Study website. <http://www.wers2011.info>.